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November 27, 2007

Phil Isenberg, Chairman and Members
Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
1418 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Isenberg and Members of the Task Force:

The Solano County Board of Supervisors has grave concerns that the health of the Delta and the Suisun Marsh will be irreversibly compromised with the proposed Vision for the Delta. We appreciate that the Task Force recognizes that the Delta is crucial to the State of California for its water – for drinking, for irrigation, for the environment, and for recreation. Our Board is resolved in its commitment to ensure that the Delta continues to serve Solano County as a resource for our historic water rights. To that end, we offer the following comments on the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force Plan:

Water Rights: The County requests that the Vision Task Force and the State acknowledge our legal and contractual area of origin water rights, as outlined in the January 1981 contract between the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the North Delta Water Agency. We strongly object to the DWR notion that these rights can be confiscated and our communities abandoned. In addition, we need assurances that those counties in the area of origin will have their water needs met before any water is exported from the Sacramento River system.

Economic Vitality: Our Board urges you to establish that the continued economic viability and vitality of the existing communities within and surrounding the Delta and the Suisun Marsh is a *coequal value to water supply and environmental improvement*. We need the economic vitality of the communities within and surrounding the Delta and the Suisun Marsh recognized in order to ensure agriculture preservation and enhancement. We believe the Vision should include a discussion of economic incentives to revitalize tourism, agriculture and related infrastructure, and the boating and fishing industries (marinas, hospitality venues, game fish hatcheries, etc.). The Vision should also address the development of aquaculture and in-delta storage on some of the Delta islands.

Infrastructure: We believe that there should be confirmation that the transportation and utilities infrastructure running through the Delta (telecommunications, electrical power, natural gas, sewage treatment, etc.) will be strengthened. The road system going through the Delta is vital to the survival of the communities within and surrounding the area. At the same time, the State highways have started to crumble because they were never designed to handle the traffic we are getting, let alone what it is going to come. This will also mean upgrading the railroads going through the Delta.

Suisun Marsh & Fresh Water Supply: Our Board is very concerned about the impacts on the Suisun Marsh and its natural habitat and wants to ensure that the Task Force's actions are consistent with the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act which covers marshlands, bays and sloughs in the waters surrounding the marsh. This means providing for adequate water quality, exercising sound water management practices including drainage within the Marsh, providing for the production of valuable waterfowl plant foods and future supplemental fresh water supply.

The Vision and subsequent plan need to address how we are going maintain a fresh water supply for the Suisun Marsh and the private landowners in the area for the existing agriculture and the duck clubs – these hunters are our partners in maintaining the ecosystem of the marsh. The salinity intrusions expected from the envisioned proposals will potentially impact the fresh water supplies serving the communities of Rio Vista, Collinsville and Birds Landing. Our experience (from prior to the State water project exports which caused the City of Benicia and the Benicia Army Arsenal to lose their ability to extract fresh water from the Suisun Bay) justifies the need for this issue to be fully addressed.

North Bay Aqueduct: We need the State to address and fund an alternate Intake for the North Bay Aqueduct Intake of the State Water Project from Barker Slough, which is envisioned as habitat for the Delta Smelt and the Splittail and for the creation of organic carbon to benefit the food chain. But this vision has adverse water quality impacts to a major drinking water source for Solano and Napa counties. Relocation estimates exceed \$170 million dollars, and the State should contribute at least 50% of that cost.

Water Elevation: In addressing sea level rise and its effect on the delta, it is important to note that while water surface increases will have a profound effect on the existing system of levees every day; during periodic flooding events, inflows from tributaries will compound those effects. The Delta Vision does not properly address the engineering improvements needed to ensure drainage of upstream storm water in watersheds draining into the Delta and the Suisun Marsh. The Delta's expected water elevation would increase flooding on areas on the fringes of the Delta, so reducing inflows into these areas would reduce flooding, and the pressures on Delta levees. We do not agree with the notion that the State should have land use authority, especially the assertion of increased jurisdiction due to sea level rise for up to 55 inches above the mean sea level. Land use decisions should remain with the local jurisdictions.

Disaster Preparedness: We agree with the Task Force's emphasis on emergency preparedness and that the State Office of Emergency Services should fund planning exercises and preposition equipment, supplies, command and control capabilities, and shelters. Additionally we recommend that you look at prepositioning rock, sand and other building materials be pre-positioned along the deep water channel east of Collinsville – at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers.

Levees: Agriculture levees need to be enhanced, not abandoned. The State should continue, and even increase, its historic role in subventions and levee maintenance as a mitigation for suppressing / seizing development rights from the landowners. These levees protect valuable farm land, wildlife and wetland habitats. The levee system in the Suisun Marsh also protects Delta water quality from salt water intrusion and mixing of salt into the western Delta.

Mitigations: There is not enough emphasis or clarity on how the State is going to mitigate the economic losses that farm owners and local governments are going to occur when lands are inundated with water, converted to habitat, or marginalized due to setbacks from levees. Local governments should not have to ask their citizens to pick up the tab due to the loss of sales taxes on the farm gate and lower property taxes. Those who benefit should pay.

In summary, we are very concerned about the future of the Delta because we know there will be winners and losers in whatever is the final outcome of the Delta. There is a strong, unified voice coming from this County, which welcomes the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with you as the Delta Vision Implementation planning progresses.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Reagan, Chairman
Solano County Board of Supervisors

cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Solano County Legislative Delegation
Michael Chrisman, Secretary of Resources
Dale Bonner, Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing
A.G. Kawamura, Secretary of Agriculture
Cindy Tuck, Assistant Secretary of California Environmental Protection Agency
Paul Clanton, Executive Director of the California Public Utilities Commission
Lester Snow, Director of Water Resources
Joseph Grindstaff, Director of California Bay Delta Authority
John Kirlin, Executive Director of Delta Vision
Mike McGowan, Chairman of Delta Protection Commission
Benjamin Carter, President State Reclamation Board
Board of Supervisors in Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin and Yolo Counties
Members of the Solano County Board of Supervisors
Cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, Vallejo and Travis Air Force Base
Solano County Water Agency
Suisun Resource Conservation District
Solano County Reclamation and Levee Districts